

MARINESCAPE FORUM PIRAEUS

Yacht Club of Greece 26-27 May 2015

The Piraeus Statement on Mediterranean Marinescapes

1.0 Preamble

50 participants from various organisations across the Mediterranean and beyond convened at the Marinescape Forum in Piraeus on 26-27 May 2015, organised by the Mediterranean Institute for Nature and Anthropos and CIVILSCAPE, in order to consider the challenges, opportunities and needs of Mediterranean marinescapes. These marinescapes consist of inter-related coastal, wetland and island landscapes, seas and oceans; they are expressions of the interaction of human beings and their environment over time. Everyone has a right to marinescapes; they are a common good and a necessity for people. A Marinescape Approach offers a unique mechanism for delivering solutions through cooperation founded on the principles of fairness, responsibility and sustainability.

Landscape, and by extension Marinescape, is an area as perceived by people whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and /or cultural factors.

On that basis, the Forum has adopted the following Statement:

2.0 Considering that:

- 2.1 The Mediterranean Basin consists of the Mediterranean Sea, its islands and the surrounding coasts and portions of land in the three continents of Africa, Asia and Europe. The Basin is a complex and coherent geographical whole consisting of a great variety of inter-connected coastal, wetland and island landscapes, seas and seabeds;
- 2.2 The marinescapes of the Mediterranean Basin are a shared cultural and natural heritage, fundamental to the life of communities at local, national and international levels, and a source of opportunities for secure and predictable renewable energy, future food needs, medicines, raw materials and sustainable economic activity and jobs in many sectors;
- 2.3 Quality of life, sustainable economic activity and the health of coastal, island and marine environments are mutually inter-dependent;
- 2.4 The marinescapes of the Mediterranean Basin are constantly changing and, without appropriate action, their distinctiveness and the integrity of their character may be threatened by diverse factors, including population growth, movement and conflict and the resulting pressure on cultural and natural resources, pollution, climate change and its effects, intensive commercial use, tourism and the unsustainable exploitation of other resources provided by the coasts, the islands and the sea;
- 2.5 There is a need for new and enhanced solutions to the protection, management, planning and development of the Mediterranean Basin if these challenges are to be met and the opportunities provided by marinescapes are to be realised in a full and sustainable manner.

3.0 Recognising that:

- 3.1 The present socio-political and economic context calls for the Mediterranean countries to find an effective road to long-term sustainability based on a Marinescape Approach which: acknowledges the inter-linkages that exist between the different domains and functions of seas, oceans, islands, wetlands and coasts; contributes to the development of integrated policy; and promotes cooperative action founded on the principles of fairness, responsibility and sustainability;
- 3.2 Marinescapes are generally complex and may extend over a large territory on land or sea, belong to several jurisdictions, contain various forms of heritage and concern actors from all sections of society;
- 3.3 A Marinescape Approach is consistent with economic vitality and job creation; it encourages responsible economic development which minimises negative effects on society and the environment and maximises the positive opportunities for realising social, cultural and environmental benefits;
- 3.4 The development of an integrated approach to marinescapes has to be consistent with other sectoral policies, so as to enhance the region's capacity to maximise the sustainable use of the natural and cultural heritage of its seas, islands and coasts, while at the same time ensuring the well-being of all now and in the future;
- 3.5 There is a lack of common understanding of marinescapes and a need for greater cooperation between the Mediterranean countries on issues pertaining to the coastal and island landscapes and marinescapes of the Mediterranean.

4.0 Taking note of:

- 4.1 Past and current initiatives to advance strategic and cooperative approaches to the understanding, governance, planning and development of marine environments, including:
 - the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention, Code of Good Practice on Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process and European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity, commonly known as the North-South Centre;
 - the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
 - the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (Barcelona Convention)
 - the European Commission's Blue Growth, Marine Knowledge, Maritime Spatial Planning and Mediterranean Sea Basin policies, strategies and actions;
 - the efforts of the Union for the Mediterranean to promote cooperation, integration, sustainable development, job creation and exchange of knowledge and innovation; and
 - transnational initiatives of various actors such as the MedWet Initiative of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands and IUCN Med.
- 4.2 The value of the principle of sustainable development which requires:
 - an integrated approach to development, planning, management and protection based on an understanding of the vital interactions and inter-dependencies between culture, society, economy and environment;
 - prioritising social and environmental justice. Fair solutions are both necessary in their own right and more likely to be sustainable in the long term;

- participatory governance which recognises the right of people to be involved in policy- and decision-making which directly concerns them;
- subsidiarity, dealing with problems at levels consistent with their solutions and with due regard both to local and to wider considerations; and
- cooperation to address the common challenges faced by all. Mediterranean Marinescapes are a common heritage, a shared responsibility and a source of mutual benefit.

5.0 Recommend that:

- 5.1 Collaboration which promotes the sustainability of the Mediterranean Basin is founded on a Marinescapes Approach which draws on the principles and concepts expressed above and embedded in international agreements such as the European Landscape Convention and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters;
- 5.2 A Mediterranean Marinescapes Observatory is considered, developed and established. This Observatory would consist of a network of partners supported by an associated infrastructure. The aim of the Observatory would be to support initiatives of government, non-governmental organisations and communities relating to the sustainable development, protection, management and planning of Mediterranean Marinescapes of all scales. The Observatory, once established, would develop, implement and support educational, scientific, technical and other programmes which contribute to this end.

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